American Women Missionaries and Pioneers Collection

Part 1: Missionaries

The Irene Forsythe Hanson Papers, 1921-1980

Series I

Correspondence
(Incoming and outgoing intermixed)

Folder Description:

Form letters describing Hanson's missionary work and life experience in China,
August 1932–October 1935

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Presbyterian Mission
Tsingtao,
Shantung, China
August to December,
1932

get kodak pictures

Dear Friends:

Back again to the village roads
To the wheelbarrow squeaking under its loads
Back to the needs and the people I love
To share the great joy that comes from above.

It is good to be back! Furlough memories of friends old and new and the joy of meeting at least some of you who are making it possible for me to be in China are still very vivid! How I wish each of you could have shared the experiences since my return in August.

The new rooms were all finished on my return so getting settled in my new home was the first task. I have a living room, and a kitchen with a Chinese-style built-in stove which, with drums attached to the stove-pipe heats the other rooms, a bath room, a bedroom and an attic. It is a cozy convenient home and to have it to come to after months in the country is a blessing indeed. I was especially glad to have a place to entertain in installments the fifty delegates to Presbytery in so many of whose homes in the country I have been entertained with such generous hospitality.

After a week's conference in Tsinan preparations for a country trip began. Bed and all, medicine box, food basket, kitchen utensils, Chinese-clothes, both single and padded, books, pictures, victrola,--- a supply for seven weeks to visit four villages had to be collected and packed. It seemed so natural to get into my Chinese-clothes to start back to the villages that it almost seemed that I had not been away. The memory of you who last year had promised to pray for us gave us a confidence that was new.

To get breakfast, close up the house, and catch an early train meant early rising. There was almost no one on the street to remark that "the foreigner has on Chinese clothes" as our rickshas piled high passed by to the station. While waiting for the train there was the opportunity to comfort a friend who was weeping bitterly for the loss of her son. The third class coach still offered its opportunity in answering friendly questions as to the who, what, why of the foreigner, to witness for the Master and to give out tracts and gospels.

At Lantsun a Christian was waiting with a wheel-barrow! Many of you will remember the model of this important vehicle. Soon, my legs duly protesting at being doubled under me, we began our squeaking ride of three and a half hours to go ten miles to the village.

Could you but have seen the river crossing! Perfectly respectable American wading would have been unspeakable. The man squatted by the bank and altho almost overcome by the humor of the situation I had to hop up on his back, put both arms around his neck and be carried over! He was so much shorter than I that in order to keep my feet out of the water he very nearly tipped me off over his head. At last he pantingly deposited me on the bank and returned for the mule and barrow. I was sorry none of you were there to enjoy it with me. How a sense of humor helps!

Altho the peanut and sweet potato harvest kept us from having regular day classes, yet each day was full of opportunities to witness. Each night the little school house was filled with non-Christians and the crowning joy of the day to me was the evening Bible class. To open His word to the scattered spiritually hungry groups is indeed no small privilege.

The spirit of revival which for a year has been sweeping our province is very evident and such a decided work of the Spirit of God I have not seen before. All was very quiet and unemotional but there was a deep spirit of conviction of sin and desire for peace. Groups came quietly to our rooms to ask us to pray and there weeping confessed their sins. One man was so convicted that for three days he could neither eat nor sleep. What a burden of sin he did pour out to God! Many came to a real vital experience of Christ as Saviour.

At Kuan Chuang the one Christian family had suffered years of persecution. The last few years a few more have believed and at a tremendous sacrifice built a small church, still without benches but kaoling stocks served very well. A few months ago even, the non-Christians who came did not respond in the least. This fall adults and children memorized a number of Bible verses.

At the last meeting we gave the used Sunday School Pictures, brought from America, to those who perfectly memorized the verses. To our surprise over twenty non-Christians received them. It is truly the work of our Lord and Saviour. I am sure you are glad your prayers are being answered. The Christians came to a new experience of Jesus as Saviour and we felt more and more as Moses - that we should remove our shoes for we were standing on holy ground indeed.

Lui Ke Chuang. Again for a week non-Christians and Christians met for Bible memorization and Bible Study. This particular group has very few baptized women members, so the church is much weakened by girls marrying into non-Christian homes. We will return soon to help the inquirers there.

One night just after we had gone to bed our outer courtyard gate sounded as if someone were trying to open it by moving the bar with a key. The sound, repeated more and more

vigorously, made us think someone just was trying to frighten us. The fact that the day before we arrived, as we later learned, two nests of bandits had been cleared out and two men held for ransom freed, didn't help us at this time to be unafraid. The noise was repeated again most vigorously and followed by the sound of footsteps in the courtyard and a rattling of the dry kaoliang in the yard. I was sure someone had entered and was preparing to fire the building. The steps came nearer and our room door was shaken gently. It is needless to say that by then our hearts were pounding and we were shaking too. Then after a silence and the second shaking of our door, Miss Fan decided we must get up, see how many had really entered and dress. She planned that since it would likely be I who would be taken, she would go with me and leave Miss Huo to give the news. Finally she got up in spite of our protests (we were afraid of stray shots) and went to the window. There in the moonlight was something black and white in front of the gate. "Strange that they would be wearing white" she thought and just then she saw it rise, and stretch out its paws, a big black and white dog! It had been fastened in by mistake and had tried every way to get out, by moving the lower bar of the gate with its mouth and failing in that, had come to our door to get us to let it out. However, through it all there was not a single sound like a dog. It was unbelievable that a dog could so sound like a person. We were relieved to see the funny side - until the next day.

The enclosed picture is of Miss Fan speaking through a copper speaking tube to a deaf old lady. Since the trumpet can be easily and cheaply copied here a number have found great joy in it. One old man very deaf for several years, by means of it enjoyed his first church service in that time.

The Yeh Tou group have the record for Bible memorization. One little boy had his father call him at night to learn his verses. His record was forty verses and an old lady surprised all with fifteen in the few days. Formerly we would have thought for non-Christians to memorize the Bible would be impossible and only this year have we tried this method and found it most strikingly successful and fruitful.

I went to my Chinese home for a few days and such a greeting they gave me. Mrs. Fan is well for her eighty-nine years. The whole family had a welcome meeting in the church with speeches and refreshments. There is such a sweet spirit of fellowship and I was glad to see them.

Twenty girls and women from nearby villages joined the local group at Tai chih Chuang for a three weeks Bible Conference, one of the best we have ever had. The local church groups provided the fuel, the salty vegetable and cereal, and the rest each one provided for herself. Here a regular schedule filled the day and early morning prayer meeting at four or four-thirty, morning, afternoon and evening classes in

phonetic writing, preparation for baptism, singing, personal evangelism and Bible, with volley ball and gymnasium for recreation. Again, from emphasis on the Bible teaching, came great conviction of sin and confession. A number found Christ as Saviour for the first time, while others came to a new realization of Him. Spiritual growth of the local church group was especially evident. The whole class was permeated by the spirit of God. It was so wholly apart from the mere influence of persons - as we ourselves were very fully aware. The last meeting of testimony, new blessing, new understanding and new pledges of loyalty was one to be long remembered.

The wheelbarrow trip the next day was the most hectic and funny of all my trips these years. The four barrows were in continuous trouble; a mule backed off a bridge into the river and the loaded barrow just saved; Miss Huo and I found ourselves tipped over on the ground unhurt, however. Miss Fan's barrow was just saved at edge of a high ledge. A blind man with us was tipped off twice; harness broke and one barrow man had a bad fall, cutting his hand. We reached home to find the indispensable victrola missing. We had to learn again not to count ourselves nor our possessions dear to ourselves. The next morning the portable was found most strangely in the bed roll of the blind man. A few experiences of the road!

The last of November we again started for the cook's village down the coast where before Miss Fan and I were marooned for ten days on the boat. The superstitious ones said that was because we'd preached against the God in the temple outside the city. The time the ship's owner said after we'd had a fearful wind, "Every time you come there is a storm". It took two days to go and on the return we tossed in a wild storm from Sunday evening until Tuesday morning. Truly the entrance of the Gospel to that big, conservative, sin hardened village has been through suffering. The little group of boys and girls who believed have suffered bitter scorn and persecution from their families who were suspicious of us and afraid of the real outcome as well as from neighbours. But they have been true! The opening of that village has been very slow and delicate and just now were we able to have a public gathering with the girls present and even then the girls were in a separate end room. Of all the scorn, cursing, disrespect and persecution Miss Huo bore as she held the first day's classes. She is small and slight but the way she managed that mob so that meetings were at last held in respectful silence and brought the group of wild youngsters under discipline was itself a work of the Master.

"The little child shall lead them." That group of young people must be the wedge to the hardened grown-up hearts, for still there is no adult who has strongly come out. Several mothers came to testify of the change in their sons. That they were not gambling, cursing, lying and disobedient as

before. One said that since last year she had not heard her son curse once and he had refused to get idol-worship paper for her. Had you heard one boy who for two years had persecuted his aunt for her belief and in that time not once called her by name, who had been given up as beyond control by his parents for stealing, and gambling, pray with tears for forgiveness of sin and had seen him before the taunting crowd kneel down with the group to pray aloud, you too would have been glad.

While Miss Huo taught this group, Miss Fan and I walked to the nearby villages all of which had never before had a witness for Christ in them. In the six days we walked 137 li (forty-seven miles) went to twenty villages and at a very conservative estimate 5000 people heard for the first time the name of Jesus. The day's experiences varied from greatest courtesy and welcome to drink tea in the formal guest hall with its rock-gardened courtyard to one place where probably through fear that we were communistic leaders (from whom they'd recently had trouble) we were so feared that altho the men listened the women stood at a distance and we felt no impression at all was made on them. At the very next village a woman surprised us by saying "Last year at Wang Chia Tan Jesus healed my disease and I pray every time we eat". Others testified to the truth of this. Anyway all of the eight families came out and just couldn't hear enough in their eagerness. One woman followed us to ask questions as we were leaving. We came to a large market where there was a big funeral. Here we were almost mobbed by the crowd of at least 500 men and a few women who wanted to see the queer foreigner and hear! We actually fled out of the village with the mob following to an open space where we could talk to them--sheep without a shepherd.

Wherever we go we find in general a new spirit, even last year not so evident as this year - a marked hunger, openness and longing for something real and dependable. Seemingly unaccountably new groups are springing up in new villages and asking to be taught. One new group with no leader themselves built a church in the temple courtyard. We will go there later. The harvest white--the labourers are few. Still the Laymen's Fact Finding Comm. feels no need for continual evangelism in future mission work. The fact-finding of these months in the country gives me a different conclusion.

Thank you for your prayers. They are being answered. Please give yourself to more definite believing, earnest prayer for the Holy Spirits leading in this critical time. We are depending on you!

Very truly yours,

Irene Forsythe

THE CONVERSION OF MR. YIN and FAMILY

April 1933

"Won't you come to the gospel meeting?", Mrs. Kao called to the young renter of the eastern house and courtyard. She paused at the door way where Mr. Yin sat busily working at a hand loom.

"Why should I go to hear that stuff!" he replied angrily, not even stopping, but shot the shuttle through the threads even more rapidly. The sound of the machine, too, had spoken his irritation and anger.

Mrs. Kao had just had a new marvelous experience of the Savior's love and how she wished it for others! She had been baptized three years before, but these years she had never once prayed; she never attended church services. She had secretly regretted her decision to join the new sect and felt so ashamed that she sincerely hoped nobody would ever refer to it. Of course to speak to another of Jesus was farthest from her thoughts.

Then the 'Glad Tidings Trio' made up of two Chinese and one Americ woman, had come to Hsiao Chen and in spite of all of her excuses to Mis Huo about the number of pairs of shoes she must make for relatives for the Spring Festival, she decided she would go just once, to give Miss Huo "face" for her trouble to invite her. She went once, then again, and not one class did she miss. Something--rather the Holy Spirit gripped her heart with a horrible sense of sin and a great illumination of the "New Way." She knew she had never been a Christian at all. Her

confession of sin and repentence had brought a marvelous release. She could pray, she knew Jesus had forgiven her sins, and she just must tell others of this marvellous joy. She had gone to her relatives and neighbors with the story and all were sure something had happened--her face showed that.

She knew, too, the history of this young couple living in her court yard and that they needed Jesus too. Unmoved by Mr. Yin's angry rebuff, she spoke of her own joy and Jesus' love and power to forgive sins and left him. His anger slowly left him, but he continued his weaving.

He was a prodigal son to be sure!. Not more than twenty years of ag he was a fugitive from his own home. After his father's death he had been so wild and gambled so that practically all of his inherited land was sold. Still there were creditors unsatisfied and he had been forced to flee secretly.

Here at his wife's village they rented a house but his periodic weaving did not give him enough for his wild life. There was a daily brawl with his wife over his lisconcious living and near neighbors could hear the beatings she suffered at his hand.

Suddenly, impelled by an irresistable force, he abruptly left the loom and went directly to the meeting. That night he went again. The next day he bought a Bible and as he entered the foreign Miss Fan's Bibl class he said, "Miss Fan, will you pray with me while I confess my sins? This burden is unbearable. I can neither eat nor sleep." Oh! the torre of sin he brought to the foot of the Cross! Great, indeed, was his joy. The next day he got up at four o'clock to go to a distant market in order to be back in time for Bible class. He began to witness to his old associates. Some cursed him. others pitied him, while others wondered what it was that could change such a renegrade. His wife, too, came to class as well as all of her family--named Han--keepers of an inn.

At the Spring Festival, the stilt-walkers, men in fancy masks with

stilts fastened to the shoes, entertain the holiday crowds. There is lewdness and drunkenness often connected with it. Mr. Yin had always been the ring leader. As usual he dressed in his mask and led the gro until a sudden shower stopped it all. He came in late to class with head low. That night he voluntarily stood before the group and said, "I sinned today by stilt-walking and drinking. Please, pray for me."

In class the stilt-walking had not been mentioned, so the next da the teacher asked him, "Mr. Yin, how did you know that you had sinned? Did someone tell you?"

"No," he answered, "I knew it myself from my own heart."

His wife and the Hans--his wife's family, Mrs. Han, her two sons her daughter--all took a definite stand for Christ. The wife of the older son was not there until the last day of the class. When she came home and found his Bible on the table she gave it an angry fling to the floor--the sequal to this we learned later.

The Trio had gone on to another nearby village. This young Mrs.Han walked that mile on her wee bound feet with the elder Mrs. Han and the other Christians for church. She greeted us with, "I want to become a Christian." Then she told her reasons.

"Our home had been a varitable hell, full of envy, cursing, bitterness, jealousy and strife, but since I've come back all is different. My mother-in-law is so happy;, and so is the whole family. We sing now where we used to wrangle. They are all different. I've never known such a happy place. I, too, want to be a Christian and want Jesus to forgive my sins."

That afternoon Mrs. Han, an unlettered country woman, who had scarcely ever left her own courtyard and never spoken in private ever before strangen men, stood up in the church, crowded with men and women to tell what had happened in her home. The whole family had come as a

result of Mr. Yin's conversion.

Mr. Yin came tob to tell us of a failure. A man on the street, just to anger him, spoke insultingly of his wife. He rushed home in anger and began to beat her. In the midst of it, he stopped, knelt before her and asked her forgiveness. For a Chinese man to kneel before his wife is a wonder in itself, not to speak of the miracle in the heart that it represented.

"Is your home happy now?" we asked.

"Oh, My! Yes! Think what it used to be! Now we go to prayer-meeting--where the group met each night to continue memorizing Scripture verses--in the evening, go home and kneel to pray together before we sleep. We could not be more happy!"

Mr. Yin is just one of numbers we could tell of in this year's experiences. May he introduce them all to you, and will you uphold them in your prayers.

See Kodaks pictures for picture of this young man who was captured by bandits.

IN THE BANDITS' HANDS .....1933 MIRACLE

"My brother has been taken by bandits", wept young Mrs. Yang as she entered the room in the church courtyard where the "Glad Tidings Trio" were living.

This much-dreaded news is almost equal to announcing a death. A wealthy person, if just taken for ransom, may, by selling practically all of his possessions, return home. If taken for revenge, however, it is almost sure death. For the poor, unable to pay the ransom, it means untold suffering and more often death.

Mrs. Yang's brother, Wang Hsiu Shan, about twenty years old, lived with his widowed mother on about six mu of land (one acre) across the river. All of their possessions, home and land, could not nearly meet the sum set for the first meeting to discuss the ransom. It was hopeless.

Soon the church bell was rung to call a special meeting and the little Christian group were crying to God, who has promised special care for widows and the fatherless. They came to God, who is Love, for He and He alone could save Mrs. Wang and Hsiu Shan.

Thursday night just after dark, four men had picked the lock on the outer gate and, before anyone was aware, were in the house.

"Where is the one who has just come back from Tientsin?" they demanded. Hsiu Shan's aunt had recently returned home and rumors of the sums of money she had brought had reached the ears of these men. She had moved to another house four days before.

"Then take her nephew!" 'Bandits never leave empty-handed'- the saying proved too true. Hsiu Shan had not been well for two days. His mother had just given him a hot drink, covered him well, and fired the k'ang (the sun-dried brick bed) especially warm to make him perspire.

"Out of here!" came the gruff command.

Several blows from the rifle barrel roused Hsiu Shan from his sleep. With no time to get even clothes or shoes, he was hustled away. Mrs. Wang hurriedly picked up a light coat and followed her son. Just out of the village gate she called most courteously, fearing to anger them by the delay, "Gentlemen, please give him this coat."

One man returned, roughly took the garment and twice flung Mrs. Wang to the ground. As she got up she heard Hsui Shan groan in pain, "My own mother! Oh, mother!"

She knew by that sound that they were beating him and that at each step a blow from the gun barrel was urging his already running pace to even greater speed. An alarm might be given any minute. Speed was their first thought.

Mrs. Wang, with a heart of lead, went quickly back through the quiet streets to tell the news. She must find someone to read for her the "Joyful Letter" left by the bandits. Such bitter irony! "Joy"! The letter gave directions for the meeting. "Come on Saturday night, between eight and ten o'clock, to the clump of trees near Hsieh Chuang. Carry a lantern and bring $200 in silver dollars, twenty ounces of opium (worth $250), ten boxes of cigarettes (each box the size of a shoe box), and two pounds of rock candy. The bearer of this present could negotiate for this ransom."

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No one offered any comfort. There was none to offer. One did not even need to ask whether she could get the demanded gifts. All knew that if all, even she herself were sold, that it could not begin to meet even the first demand. None could help her. They could only groan and sigh with her. This was real sympathy too for who knew that they might not be the next ones. Mrs. Wang, with no husband, and no immediate men relatives, must just bear it and go alone for one could not ask another to do this. Back to the empty room and to the empty bed she went, and prostrated herself before God who alone could help her.

Hsiu Shan was exhausted when at last he was led into a room quite filled with hay— some where. They tied his queue (yes, he still had one) to the rafters and bound him in sitting position with ropes around his arms and legs. Fortunately his ears were not, as is often done, stopped with tallow but a blind was tied around his eyes. Two men with a gun were left on guard. Hsiu Shan slept some from sheer exhaustion but the agony of body and spirit gave him little rest.

Friday morning they gave him a pair of old trousers to put on. That noon he had a tiny sweet potato and that night a drink of water. His body cramped and pained but he dared not speak. From the time of his capture he had prayed continually and committed himself to the Master's care. Friday afternoon as he was praying the guard overheard the words 'God' and 'Jesus'. That brought forth a volley of oaths and persecution.

"You need not cry and blubber! You are in our power. None of the gods can help you! Who is Jesus anyway? He can't help you! Your mother is coming tomorrow night and if she does not satisfy our demands we will make a foreign swing of you!" This referred to a kind of torture hanging from the rafters.

"We have believed in Jesus for three generations and He will surely hear my prayer," said Hsiu Shan.

"Not even 'The venerable grandfather in Heaven' (the non-Christian term for God) can help you!," the guard retorted.

Hsiu Shan was silent. That was the first hint of the time set for the meeting. What could his mother do! Somehow though through it all a strange hope stirred in his heart.

Saturday forenoon he heard one of the guards rouse the sleeping one, give him the gun, and tell him to watch as he was going out to buy beancurd. Hsiu Shan lifted his bandage. The guard had gone to sleep again.

"Brother", he said.

There was no answer. This was his chance. He saw that the ropes binding his hair had loosened a little, two ropes the thickness of a finger. He could just reach them with his teeth. Desperately he bit at the ropes and with amazing speed he chewed through the two of the them. That loosened one of his arms. He untied the other and his legs, slipped out of his coat, gave one jump clearing the body of the guard. He didn't turn to see but a deep snore told him that the guard was still asleep. With strength born of desperation he jumped over the high courtyard wall and tore madly down the street.

"See the crazyman! See the crazyman!" was shouted after him.

Well could he pass as one, as he half-naked, with his hair filled with straw, ran wildly down the street. Near the end of the village he met an old man.

"Save me! Save me!" pled Hsiu Shan and ran to him.

The old man welcomed him very cordially, so cordially in fact that Hsiu Shan was suspicious so left him and ran out of the village and on and on to one perhaps a mile distant. He did not know where he was nor where to turn for help, but God was guiding! He turned into an open gate and knelt before the woman he met in the yard.

"Adopted Mother! Save me! Save me!"

She hastily closed the gate and took him into the house. She could understand his trouble all too well, for last year her son had been taken and her own husband killed at the time. When Hsiu Shan told of the old man who had so welcomed him they said, "That man has two sons who are bandits. Had you fallen into their hands you would have been worse off than before."

Hsiu Shan's heart went out to God in praise for His guidance.

Hsiu Shan begged to be sent off at once but his rescuers urged that he wait until dark lest he be seen going from their gate and they should suffer for it. Hsiu Shan then explained that he had only his mother, that she must go alone that very night to meet the bandits, that she couldnot possibly take enough to please them, and that now since he had escaped if he did not arrive in time to stop her that they would take revenge on her. They must help him get home!

"It is a great risk but there is no other way," they concluded at last.

They gave Hsiu Shan a pair of new trousers, a coat, a straw hat, and a basket to carry as a disguise. The woman tucked a bundle of clothes under her arm as if going to the pool outside the village to wash and went out to see if it was safe for him to go. She looked in all directions; there was not a person on the street, so she went ahead followed by her husband's brother pushing a wheelbarrow. Hsiu Shan followed him. They looked as if they were going to work in the fields. Outside the village the man gave Hsiu Shan careful directions home, telling how to avoid deep ditches and bushes where his captors might lie in wait for him. Hsiu Shan hastily spoke an appreciation too deep for words and hurried homeward. Oh, the joy of freedom! But there was still the haunting fear of not reaching home before his mother left. His heart bade him run, but that would cause suspicion; so he followed his better judgment and walked, altho the road seemed very slow and tedious.

Mrs. Wang's mother, nearly eighty years old, on hearing the news had hobbled on her cane to her daughter's home to help if she could. The time for the dreaded trip had come. Mrs. Wang put her presents in a basket, four dollars and two pounds of rock candy.

"God have mercy on me when they see this pitiful little present. Five hundred dollars would not have been enough to meet their demands."

Neither dared put into words the dread in both hearts of what would happen when they looked into the basket. She covered it with a red cloth. It was a "Joyous Letter" and a "Joyous Meeting" to which she was going, hence the red cover on the basket. The old grandmother would go with her, she could not bear to have her daughter go alone. They could start early and she could rest often on the way. So with lantern and basket in hand the two started off for the lonely vigil. The widow's cup of bitterness seemed full but the tap of her mother's cane on the path relieved her loneliness somewhat and thru it all was the consciousness of The Unseen Friend.

Hsiu Shan was nearer home now. He could run and he did.

"Had his mother gone?" was his only conscious thought. "Who was that coming on the road?"

"Mother! Mother!"

"My son! You've escaped! Thank God!" Both prostrated in the dusty path to praise God for answered prayers. In an interval of five minutes Hsiu Shan would have missed his mother.

Back home they went. Soon the whole village crowded into the courtyard to welcome him.

The Christian group had no news until Sunday afternoon. Just when all were fearing the worst Mrs. Wang herself came to tell the good news. The Christians helped eat the rock candy that the bandits did not get. What a time for rejoicing there was. Monday Hsiu Shan came too to tell his story and to declare his lifelong allegiance to the Master.

Mrs. Wang still had one unanswered desire, her son had no promised bride. After some whispered conversations with Mrs. Wang about one of the Christian girls, who was suitable for him in every way, and after the girl had given her consent, the Elder was asked to be middleman to consult her family and make all arrangements.

That was a happy day. Her son home uninjured, their home still theirs, and a nice Christian bride in prospect. "The Lord is just too good. Who could ever dream of it turning out this way!" said Mrs. Wang with joy.

IRENE FORSYTHE
TSINGTAO, SHANTUNG
DECEMBER 1933

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The above is not a Chinese puzzle but a Chinese word, 'fu', meaning happiness. To get happiness sometimes is harder than solving a Chinese puzzle. This word is ever-present in the Chinese New Year celebrations that have just passed. Happiness, 福, in big black strokes is written on large squares of red paper and pasted on doors, walls. gates, over bins of grain, on trunks, and even on the back of rickshas,—all with hope of happiness during the New Year. It takes more than the mere pasting up of the word to bring it, however. Is this year one of trials? Have you the happiness that transcends material troubles? On this recent trip we were fired anew by the marvelous victory of some Christians in great suffering and persecution. Such faith is the source of real happiness. Few of us know what it is to suffer for Christ's sake and for our belief in Him.

PENNILESS FOR CHRIST

Mr. Hsieh at Yang Chia Miao just last April came to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. His home joined those of his two uncles; one not a Christian, was very rich. In June this uncle repulsed a bandit attack, wounding one of the bandits. In October they came again, determined to get revenge. Because the gate was too strong for immediate entrance they set fire to the house. The fire soon spread to the adjoining homes and the dry thatch roofs were ablaze at once. The home and the carpenter shop of the Christian were burned and the rich man's son was killed in the turmoil. The bandits then tried to find the uncle's three-year old grandson, who had been taken for refuge to the Christian's courtyard. Unable to find the baby, they turned to take Mr. Hsieh in his place. The battle began in his heart—should he go with them or give away the baby's hiding place?

To go would mean possible death and at the very least financial loss, for with his home and shop already burned, he would have to sell his few acres of land for ransom. If he gave away the baby's hiding place,— which he could do by a mere direction of his uplifted chin and none would ever know—he could save his land but it would be sure death for the baby, the last of his uncle's line, and an added grief to the one who had already lost a son. The struggle was intense but brief, ended by the thought of the Lord.

"If I give him up I will be as bad as a bandit myself and be a disgrace to the name of Jesus. I'll go!" was his decision.

So he went with them to spent two weeks in a sweet potato pit. He was marvelously kept by the consciousness if God's presence and like Paul in jail sang hymns of praise.

The "letter of joy" left by the bandits designated that of the thousand-dollar ransom, eight hundred must be paid by the rich uncle. He deeded land approximating that sum for security for a loan at an exhorbitant rate of interest at the nearby market. At last the sum was secured and after several night meetings the ransom was taken to the indicated place and left. Then Hsieh Wen Chang was free. Praising God all of the way he went back home, poor in this world's goods but rich in his experience of God. The next night he was back in his place teaching the class for the illiterate with a ringing testimony of God's love.

Later the uncle's land sold for much less than the eight hundred dollars. He refused to meet not only his share of the principal but also the rapidly increasing interest. When we saw him every foot of Mr. Hsieh's land was sold and the debt was not paid yet. The Christian was stripped of every possesion and his uncle who not only ungrateful for the sacrifice which left him his grandson, but was accusing his nephew.

The rich uncle, the non-Christian, still had land and money out on interest; the Christian for Christ's sake was left stripped utterly bare. It was the problem of the ages—the seeming triumph of evil the suffering for righteousness sake. Two old ladies discussing it coming home from market voiced the common sentiment.

"Hsieh Wen Chang has had this happen to him because he had become a Christian. He does not burn incense nor paper at the temples nor does he worship his ancestors".

"Yes, that is true. He was taken but he is back alive even tho he has lost everything. Now, his uncle burns paper and incense and worships his ancestors and does not believe in this Jesus but he lost his son," answered the second.

"Oh, that was just his fate", came back the retort.

To some of the Christians who had not themselves suffered it was unanswerable and they turned back temporarily, but Hsieh Wen Chang was adamant through it all.

"God will not for sake me! Even to death will I trust Him!"

He had know the Lord such a short time and had such a little Christian background that I marveled, and wondered if I could so triumphantly lose all for Christ's sake.

The Christians collected materials, helped him rebuilt his mud house, and took an offering to help through the immediate winter needs. All are praying that soon the uncle will as least repay his share. Later we must help him with capital for his carpenter shop. Will you pray for the uncle and for Hsieh Wen Chang?

PERSECUTED FOR BELIEVING

It was not even a year after the first entrance of the gospel, as sung by a travelling peddler in the streets of this village, that the little group of fifteen baptized Christians were bitterly persecuted. The way that even children, wives, and daughters-in law, who are all under the authority of others, went through it and the way the group were lovingly patient without hate and revenge was truly the proof of Jesus' love in their hearts.

Three men broke up the Christmas service, carried away three benches and a lamp, and beat one of young men. Two girls were beaten by opposing relatives and one man publicly beat his son's wife with kaoliang stalks.

She later, with shining face said to us, "He may beat my body but he can not touch my heart. I will believe in Jesus even tho he should kill me!" Posters were put up in the street bearing all manner of accusations, the names of neighboring Christians and that of Mr. Coonradt, with threats that if they came again they would be severely beaten.

The group still held the evening prayer meetings spite of continued annoyance and persecution. The elder of the village tried in vain to persuade them to take the benches back. Several friends who tried to make a friendly settlement only aroused deeper anger. When it seemed the most hopeless God settled it, much like in Old Testament days when the armies attacking Isreal were frightened by rumors and fled. Word came that Mr. Coonradt was going that day to the seat of the local government. The leader of the persecution on hearing it turned white and green for fear that Mr. Coonradt was going to file a lawsuit against him. Under no circum stances would that be done but the fear was enough.

He hurried to the Christian leader, begging to be taken to Mr. Coonradt. "I'll kneel before him or do anything that he says if he will only forgive me!"

He got the village elder to go with him to return the benches and lamp. He was so delighted with the assurance that he could be forgiven that he asked the Christian leaders to a feast.

Two of the persecutors came regularly to the meetings for the week we were there and the father-in-law not only allowed his son's wife to attend but also came himself.

TEMPLE BUILDER BUILDS CHURCH

Twenty some years ago both Mrs. Chang and her son were demon-possessed, making them vicious as well as crazy. They collected money to build a temple for the worship of this demon and the son, a carpenter, built it. God's love, tho, came to Mrs. Chang before she herself knew it.

Very early one morning a voice wakened her saying, "Go to your son ; he is hanging himself."

She went at once and was just in time to save him as he had just tied the rope to the raftey. The same voice told her to go to destroy the temple and both she and her son would be freed. Still half-crazy but with unusual strengh she went to temple tore off the doors, took out the idol, and carried the doors home for fire wood. The other villagers beat her for this and she started off to go to the city to file suit against them for beating her. Her road led thru the home of a distant relative, my Chinese adopted mother, Mrs Fan. Mrs Fan stopped her, told her of Jesus and His power to save her. They took her to church where all prayed for her. From that day to this she has been absolutely freed and is a ture follower of Jesus.

In her home village this spring Christians and non-Christians all joined in hauling bricks and dirt for a church building. In six days the main part of a nice brick building was completed. The dream of Mrs. Chang's heart had come true. Her son who had formerly built the demon shrine has done practically all of the carpenter work. He gets up hours before breakfast to work at the church and has given unstintingly of his loving labor. The church is his pride and joy. The Spirit of God, as of old, still chooses and empowers the children of earth to build temples for His dwelling, both material and spiritual.

IRENE FORSYTHE
NEW 2 TSI YANG ROAD
TSINGTAO, SHANTUNG, CHINA

FEBRUARY 1934.

The Bandit Shrine

By the above instances you can see that of those who have heard, many have believed, and accepted Him as their guide and Saviour, but the following is an example of the many who still cling to the old superstitions.

A bandit had been killed at Liu Chia Chu. A man secretly stole the clothes from the corpse, a most terrible act in the eyes of all Chinese That night what he thought to be the returned spirit of the bandit accused him of the theft and demanded that a temple be dedicated to him in redress for the wrong. The man the n collected money and built a new shrine outside the village wall. A bandit became a god! A pool of dirty water became magic! Many came to carry the water away in bottles to heal all kinds of diseases. Prayers and vows of all kinds were made. The incense bowl was full of ashes and many flags adorned the shrine and hung on the tree above it as proof of the great power of the inhabit - ing spirit. As we walked by our comments on the absurdity of the whole affair were overheard by a number of men. They were much angered that we should dare to speak of it lightly. "It is better than the foreign gods of the 'foreign devil'", they muttered darkly.

~~Please remail to~~ Do not remail but let me
mrs E. J. Forsythe be person and so city
710 Jefferson St. need that will be
Oregon City Ore. interested

4/20

We Rcvd

From Irene Forsythe, Tsingtao, Shantung, China

Copy of Irenes last letter . of Jan 28 1935.

Miss Forsythe's mother has written:—

"Irene ~~She~~ is at her Chinese home to spend the New Year as that is the ~~as that is the~~ main festival of the year, more like our Christmas, with its extra cooking and the young folks coming home for the extra vacation. You see this is a Christian home in which she has been adopted on account of the name. Forsythe in Chinese is 'Fan' and this family's name is 'Fan'. So the old Mother said that Irene had to come to take the place of the little girl that died many years ago.

"The story of this little girl is that when this Mother was younger and the little girl was sick, she went from shrine to shrine to get help and to get her healed, and one day on her journey she heard Old Br. Corbett preaching on the text, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Immediately the womwn said that is what I want. Is that for a woman? and he told her it was and prayed with her, and told her to go home and pray and if the Lord wanted the little girl he would take her but if he wanted her to have her he would heal her. But the little girl died but the Mother had such peace, her friends could not understand what had happened to her that she was not weeping and wailing, but she told them that she had Jesus to help her.
From that conversation there is a whole villege of Christians, and Irene became a member of that, I should say relative of, that village just over night.

"Well, she was in this home to spend last Christmas and all seemed very much like home to her with the hustle and the getting ready for the absent ones coming home, extra cooking and all that Christmas means to the christian home. and she was ~~sure~~ getting a good rest and and she needed it, having been out in the country draging around since the first of Nov., and just leaving the hospital to take up this work of going from place to place in all kinds of weather and rough ways of going."

These weeks out have been so blessed with His gracious love and blessing. I want to tell you about a rich Elder in whose home we stayed for a week. He and an other man had shares in a brewery, so satisfied in their wealth. And as far as we could ~~absolutly~~ there was no results, but deep conviction and great resistance to the Holy Spirits call with the rich Elder.

Three non-christian women took definite stand and fully confessed sins and came to a marvelous real experience of forgivness of Christ. One woman smoked since she was 6years old. after her confession the desire was entirely gone, a quarrel was made up and such a visable change in her. One day she said that Jesus is so wonderful I just want to be with Him, if he should even lead me to hell Id go.

In this same place they saw a large goup of old heathen ladies going through the heathen worship before a large painted Idols scrolls, burning incens paper, chanting and bowing a pitiful. That section has ~~such a lot of~~ them. The leader is a Satanic medium. One of that number came to believe but would not make a clean confession of sins, so found no real relief.

Three young teen-age boys came to take the stand for christ and confessed sins and had a share of persecution before we left. Please pray for them.

Then at an other place Sla Kau, after hammering of 5 times a day those hardened hearts came thru, all of the group, but an old Elder who had sold the church property, and was a sneek all

As we prayed with him tears streamed from his eyes ,but as far as we know is still in Judas seat. The rest of the group are striving and cleaning up.

An old mans son, in whoes home we lived, gave up his alcohol, and he could carry a lot of it,, then thought he try it again but was so sick by one swallow. Then the father after 3 day of no tobacco tried it again and was so drunkened by it almost fell from his chair. They both said never again. If the Holy Spirit didnt use these unusual means none of these old nominal beleivers would buge. They are lots harder hearted than non christian converts.

One old man told in his confession that he had been in a league with Satan in a gambling business. He never lost and said regardless of how dark the night there was always a light at his feet, but had not followed it for several years. These things are mild to what we hear all about us. We do not doubt Satins tricks

At Ma Lan There used to be many christians but at boxe times all went back but one old man Mr. Chin he had seven sons who had left jesus but not worshiped Idols. We went there through a deep snow and arrived at the beginning of a busy season, and did not get a very warm reseption. Wife of the seventh son had had a bit of an awakning a year ago, We just had a week the Holy Spir knew and did work fast. The first one to power out sins took 3hours We have through this dumping out process no less than 500 times. But never in all my wildest fanticies could I conceive such a torrent of horrible Sins, It wasent made up either. A baptised christian but absolutly left the Master for 20 years. Never realy had Him in her heart, in name only. For three nights before we went sh could not sleep, thought she was going to die. When she heard of our comming she said, O I going back to Jessus and she did and all the families of ~~of~~ 4 sons of the six at home. All came through in confession of jesus as Saviour. A group from a near by church came for a class in second coming, and it was great. The man in whoes home lived had been to France and what he saw there knocked all belief out of him. It was the second coming teaching that griped him . My we had a day and night of heaven there. They are going to build a ~~&~~ house on the 4th sons land for a church, Pray for them,

Sincerely,
Ida Forsythe

CABLE ADDRESS, "INCULCATE NEW YORK" TELEPHONE WATKINS 9-2000

THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.
156 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

(Irene Forsythe)
6 Tsi Yang Road,
Tsingtao, China,
October 21, 1935.

Dear friends:-

Now for a little visit with you. I have been in a couple of weeks now from the country and I am busy getting off for a long stay - maybe until spring, but at least over January. Please pray for physical strength for us in the strenuous weeks ahead and for Miss Faris' health. She is really not well at all and is so essential, humanly speaking, especially when we go to pioneer places. When you reach this we will be in a field to open up three new places. Who knows what is ahead - bombs or persecution - He is sufficient. We must go back to the 'village of-the-bomb' before I write again so please remember that.

I am glad to hear about the Spiritual Life groups. Surely the Holy Spirit is waiting to just pour out in fullness where hearts are ready.

Thank you for your interest and prayers and do know that it means more than I can tell you to know that there are steady rope-holders - else we would not be able to go down to the depths for the pearls! I will add some incidents.

Most sincerely, yours for China,

Irene Forsythe

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'Tea-Cup And Rice-Bowl Evangelism' - June harvests sent us in from the villages. Then came the Biennial Mission Meeting, a week of business, play, prayer, and inspirational Bible study. Tea-cup and rice-bowl evangelism might describe the full days along with and in-between the Chinese and foreign conferences that filled the summer. The little home has been rededicated to the Master and, as He has led, there have been many guests, both Chinese and foreign, sometimes for two meals a day to share the simple Chinese food. Jesus was here, too, many times, as sins were challenged, spiritual problems, both defeats and victories were frankly shared. Some lives were newly surrendered and others found new strength to go on. To think that He still comes to break bread with His children!

Moonlight Service On The Mountain - With the last of August and the lessening of the summer heat, again we were packed up, going by bus to the Lao mountain district. After leaving the bus we climbed two mountains and at the summit had a marvelous view of the Yellow Sea, only here is azure - bluenot yellow. We wound along mountain paths, past bamboo groves, to a small Christian village nestled on the mountainside, on up to where we were to live in new clean rooms commanding a view of the encircling mountains. The first evening all gathered on a large rock in front of their homes. In the moonlight tall trees in silhouette, the music of a swift mountain stream, and the tiny points of light from numberless fireflies, made a most ideal beginning but best of all was humble eager hunger of the group. They have been involved in a lawsuit for several years with a Taoist priest in charge of the temple land which they till. It threatens the very life of the village. They went into it with the wrong spirit but now are thoroughly chastened and repentant. They decided to let millet and kaoliang, which they were just ready to harvest, wait and have four meetings each day. In such an attitude they could not fail to

find blessing, and as the rising sun made the mountains hazy blue pink, all went down to the little church for the early hour of prayer. Hours were spent during the day studying about the Lord's return and the heart-searching qualifications for meeting Him unashamed. At the end for three days every spare minute was spent in praying with each one individually. More than twenty, old and young, came voluntarily to pour out life-long resentments and sins and to pray for love to replace the hatred for the Taoist priest.

No Temples In This Village - Three days were spent at Nan Pei Ling, an entire Christian village in which there are no temples nor women with bound feet. This the sixty-years anniversary of the building of the church. They are educated. Prosperous, with no outward difficulties, and by comparison one senses self-righteousness and self-satisfaction and divisions that stunt spiritual growth. The Holy Spirit brought new truth and challenge to them and at a recent annual meeting there was evident improvement but they need your prayers!

Grapes And Fellowship At Shakou - Shakou is surrounded by many acres of heavily loaded grapevines. A continuous line of men swinging along with great baskets, swung from the two ends of carrying poles, filled with grapes destined for Shanghai, passed by each day. There are three Christian families there and the Elder, Mr. Chang, is most interesting. From a childhood of extreme poverty he has educated himself, has a flourishing business in Tsingtao, and is building up a fine country estate. One section is a church and has a guest room for an evangelist. Each night non-Christians filled the church; in spite of the harvest, Christians came from several villages for a week of daily classes. This little group, though nominally Christian for many years came to the first experience of Christ two years ago. It was a deep joy to see their growth in the two years and it is another proof that 'labor in the Lord is not in vain'.

Opium Smoker Changed - Mr. Chiao was a third generation Christian in name but in life was running the whole gamut of sin. He was a disgrace to the Name and the cause of great unhappiness in his home. His wife in desperation, on hearing of our going, said that she would harvest the crops and sent him to Elder Chang's to stay. After a few days he was convicted of sin to come to Christ to ask forgiveness and to plead for power to lead a new life. We knelt with him in prayer and the desire for opium, drink and even tobacco was taken away. His whole appearance showed his release and it was no wonder that when he went home to bring his wife to church on Sunday that she greeted him with, "I know that you have brought Jesus home with you." At church he gave a ringing testimony to the new power in his life. Pray that he may remove the stench he has given to the name of Jesus.

Church Cleaning - After two years of absence from ShihKou we hardly recognized the church. On my very first country trip the Elder kept his ox in the yard and his farm implements in the church. This was changed several years ago but now the old mud courtyard wall, the worn-out thatch on the roof, and the dust and cobwebs inside have been replaced by brick walls, a tile roof, and a whitewashed interior. It was even a greater joy to hear of heart-temples, too, that have been renovated.

'In Peril Of Being Driven Out By The Heathen' (With Apologies to Paul) - The wheelbarrows squeaked merrily and the scenes by the road were enjoyable as our two borrowmen, one pulling and one pushing, took us on to our next village home. Again there came that almost overwhelming sense of God's wondrous grace in hundreds of little things of life and the feeling of utter unworthiness that the joy of such a ministry should be ours. With the resolve to try to give in return a more unselfish loving service, the thought came that there might not be any place for us to live. I felt willing, if it were necessary, even to camp in the streets. Then our hearts were hushed in prayer as we neared the big village, widely reputed to be very rich.

This was to be pioneer sod-breaking and it is a tremendous responsibility, this presenting the Lord Jesus Christ and preaching the Cross for the very first time, to those who do not know the least about Him and to whom the word, Jesus, even is utterly foreign. As we were pushed by high walls and through big gates we saw entrances and roofs, that was all that we could see, that bespoke wealth. A man came out to lead us through a wide gate, into a courtyard with a grape arbor and flowers on into a high formal hall with a bedroom at the end. There were some nice pieces of furniture and scrolls on the walls. A gentleman interested in Christianity had moved out of his house that we might have a home. It was one of the nicest places we had lived in all these years - when I was all ready to live on the street! How like the Master's love. The test of loyalty was to come later and was to be of a different kind. Women and children came to see the new arrivals. None of them knew what we meant by the word 'Jesus'. They even answered Miss Hou, whose old home is not far from there and whose dialect was identical to theirs, "We cannot understand your language." It was virgin soil indeed.

The Church On The Street - One of the Christians borrowed a canvas sunshade several feet square, like those used for the markets, to be the street church. A table, a victrola to draw the crowd, a few benches, picture posters for putting up on the mud wall, a lantern for night and our church was well furnished. Taking a street a day and spending around six hours at the three meetings - not five minute talks these - we covered the village. By the end of three days there were not many either old or young who did not know of the essentials of the gospel and at least who Jesus is. That was too much for Satan to take quietly.

Ordered Out - The Door Still Open - Saturday evening a message came from the village authorities asking us to leave and at once and that there should be no more preaching! All had been so cordial that this was hard to understand. Some reported that there was fear that we would bring in bandits and others asked whether Miss Hou and Miss Fan were Koreans. We would stay without question but the two families of Christians were poor and it might involve them with the rich rulers. The big question was the attitude of our host. We decided to wait the decision of the Elder in a nearby town who had made the arrangements. Early Sunday morning the Elder sent a gift of meat and invited us there for dinner - this was a reassuring bit of thoughtfulness. He is a man of influence and no little wealth. He had already had a message from our host that he wanted us to stay as long as possible and that his home was open for a meeting place. The Elder, too, had sent a message to the village authorities that we were within the laws of China, that we had not the least idea of leaving, and that he would guarantee that there would be no bandits. Glad of heart we went back to the street that afternoon. The next day our host gave a great defense of Christianity before the representative of the rich family and all was clear. They put the blame on a messenger. At any rate that village is still open, there is a spirit of great friendliness among the people and a little band of interested inquirers. To Him be the Praise.

Ahead are more villages to be opened. Will you take these prayer burdens? It is your work you know, I am only your representative. Thank you for all of your loving remembrances and allowing me this gladdest of all glad jobs.....lodging in the villages.

I.F.